THE INFLUENCE OF BLACK NON-STANDARD ENGLISH ON PERSON PERCEPTION

BY

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The need for and merits of bi-dialectalism are currently an area of some controversy. Previous investigation suggests that speakers of sitgmatized dialects of English in the U.S.A. culture are at an evaluative disadvantage when compared with speakers of General American dialect. These same studies have consistently found that Black Non-standard dialect is associated with very negative stereotypes. The studies which have arrived at these conclusions are less than compelling, however, due to a number of common methodological flaws.

This study was designed to test, under more stringent conditions, the validity of the findings that BNS speakers are at a disadvantage when compared to General American speakers. In addition, an attempt was made to separate the grammatical and phonological channels of speech in order to identify the basis for speech linked stereotypes.

Spontaneous speech samples were collected from white and black males of similar education and age describing a non-salient landscape. These speech samples were then transcribed. The scripts were then exchanged among groups and re-recorded in an attempt to separate the two major dimensions of speech: grammatical and phonological. The 16 speech samples were divided into 32, 15 second segments (2 from each condition) and randomly ordered on a master tape. This tape was then independently judged for dialect representativeness by three dialect experts. Twenty-four white female and twenty-four white male graduate business students then rated the speech segments in terms of the evaluative dimension of the semantic differential.

The results of a 3-factor ANOVA supported the hypothesis that BNS speakers are negatively perceived as compared with GA speakers. No difference was noted between male and female raters. BNS speakers were <u>not</u> more negatively perceived when using GA grammar. The major finding of this research is a significant interaction between the phonological and grammatical aspects of dialect.

Chapter ONE

INTRODUCTION

Does it make a difference which dialect of American English a person employs? Is there a preferred dialect style? Are there depreciated or negatively perceived dialects of American English? If so in which situations? These and related questions have been the focus of communication research since the early days of radio. On a common sense level we are all aware that skin color, hair texture, and physiological structure serve to distinguish large groups of individuals. In a general way we are also aware that these physical features often serve as clues to a broad range of (physical traits and personality characteristics) qualities, some factual and some imagined.

Research into listener reactions to various speech styles takes notice of another distinguishing characteristic that can label a speaker as readily as the traits mentioned above. Recently articles and studies have delt with dialect in general and the use of Black Non-standard Dialect specifically.

James Sledd, in a 1969 article, felt that the imposition of "white" dialect on Black children is a cause of Black "self hate." He rejected the idea that the use of Black Non-standard English (hereinafter BNS) limits the upward mobility

of those who employ it. He concluded by suggesting that it is impossible to effectively teach the Black student "bi-dialectalism" (fluency in BNS as well as standard English) because of the hostility and rejecting white dialect evokes in the Black student's peer group(s). Sledd's views while lacking in objectivity, still serve to indicate the strength of emotion that is attached to a person's perception of a style of speech.

Other studies (Belcher, 1977; Marino, 1977; Holt, 1978; Quay and Mathews, 1977; Fetcher, 1978) have concluded that the use of BNS to some degree inhibits the learning process of the Black child. It is not the design or intention of this study to promote or sponsor an argument in favor of any position with regard to the use of BNS. This study <u>is</u> designed to determine the affective consequences (if any) of the use of BNS in the southeastern U.S.A. culture. This will be accomplished by determing how people (Black, white, male, female) react to the use of this dialectal style in comparison with standard English, General American Dialect). Research reviewed in this study suggests that Black Non-standard Dialect speakers are at a perceptual disadvantage when compared with General American Dialect speakers (hereinafter GA). This cannot be stated more definitely, however, due to several methodological flaws (present in most research in the field) which may dilute or confound the generalizability of the extant experimental results.

BNS: A DESCRIPTION.

Before these previous studies are reviewed it would be advisable to describe what BNS is. Proponents of the unstigmatized use of BNS contend that it should be recognized as a legitimate speech style. Smith, in his book (Trans Racial Communication, 1973), states that Black English has its roots in Black Africa. According to Smith, Black English borrowed English vocabulary and retained African grammatical elements. He contends that Black English is not incorrect English for it has its own regularized grammar and predictable grammatical pattern. Rich (1974) also feels that BNS is a legitimate speech style which represents the Black cultural experience in the United States.

Even so, Rich notes that dialects and accents pose two problems, First, they pose a barrier to simple understanding insofar as they disrupt information transfer. Second, she notes that negative reactions to certain dialects can cause listeners to "turn off" a speaker, and to disregard the content of his message.

Carter (1977) notes that Black English employs alternate verb forms, deviate phonology, and alternate communication styles such as "shucking" and "rapping." Carter reports that the function of these alternate styles is to allow users an acceptable level of self respect in "no-win" situations, involving the power group. These alternate styles developed as a reflection of Black social and cultural experiences. In terms of operationalizing

(BNS), Hoover (1978) characterized Black English as differing from Anglo Saxon English (GA) in the following ways: (1) weak final consonants, unless grammar is affected (not dropping the ed to signify past tense); (2) simplified consonant clusters; and (3) general "l" and "r" lessness.

A general set of features which distinguishes black from white dialects is as follows (Bailey, 1965); (Stewart, 1967):

1. Clear /l/ in prevocalic position
2. Bilabial (sic) aspirants, /β/ and /ɐ/, replaced /b/ and /f/, respectively.
3. /b/, /d/, and /g/ as fully voiced imploded stops (positions not specified by authors)
4. Neutralization of final /m/ and /n/, with a resulting nasalization of the preceding vowel
5. /f/ and /v/ as bilabial spirants
6. Absence of the copula
7. Absence of the possessive morpheme
8. Was used for the completed past, and been for the past, up to and including the present
9. Be for durative aspect or future, and gonna for the conditional future
10. They and you for their and your, respectively.

Before speaking directly to the question of the evaluational consequences of BNS, a brief review of general research in the person perception area is appropriate.

General Person Perception Research.

The earliest vocal characteristic research was radio related. Research by Cantril and Allport (1943), Fay and Middleton (1939) and Taylor (1934) found listeners to be only moderately accurate in judging the sex and age of a speaker and somewhat less accurate in inferring occupation, height, weight and appearance. Is it interesting to note that no characteristic was judged correctly all of the time, and furthermore, judges tended to agree more with each other than with actual speaker characteristics. This general agreement among perceptions, combined with little better than chance accuracy, suggests that the judges were responding to stereotyped perceptions of certain vocal traits, rather than genuine speech based clues of personality and physical characteristics. Later studies (Licklider and Miller, 1951; Kramer, 1963) also found that evaluations of personality, based solely on voice, have little or no accuracy.

Research with psychiatric patients conducted by Markel et al. (Markel, Meisels and Houck, 1964; Markel, 1969) has shown some success in identifying speech traits of schizophrenic individuals that accurately predicted aspects of personality. A later study by Markel (1972) with non-psychiatric patients found that trained judges could isolate some general personality traits with accuracy from brief, spontaneous, taped passages. In general though, research suggests that in most situations

very little can be accurately inferred about an individual based solely on his vocal style. This is not to say, however, that nothing is suggested about an individual by his voice. On the contrary, many studies have identified strong stereotypical associations with certain vocal characteristics.

Addington, in a (1968) study, examined the premise that certain voices are stereotypes; they definitely impress listeners as being the voice of persons who might be classified (according to one or another personality types). Addington contends that our voices elicit stereotypes of personality which may or may not be consistent with more valid assessment techniques. He investigaged the relationships among nine vocal characteristics and forty personality characteristics. Using a methodology typical of most research in the field, Addington recorded male and female speakers imitating seven voice qualities (breathy, tense, thin, flat, throaty, nasal, orotund, rate and pitch variety) while reading a standardized (non-spontaneous) passage. The recorded samples were first judged by experts for validity and then evaluated by college freshmen. The experimental subjects were found to ascribe specific personality traits from certain vocal qualities. Further, these noted ascriptions tended to be uniform, supporting the premise that the evaluators shared stereotypes of certain speech cues. In short, it was found that vocal manipulations do affect the nature of personality perception. Each of Addington's vocal characteristics (with one exception) was effective in altering the listener's image of the speaker.

Although the 40 perceptual categories and 9 vocal characteristics are not exhaustive, Addington's results suggest that many speech based variables such as word choice, intensity, disfluencies and dialect have the potential to color a listener's perception of a speaker.

Other Factors Influencing Perception.

Intuitively we recognize that the actual words an individual employs can potentially influence the way he or she is perceived. Language intensity is one area which research has determined can alter a speaker's perception by an audience. Bowers (1964) determined that the use of intense terms (terms that strongly suggest emotions, death, sex, etc..), multisyllable words that connote strength and indicate direction of attitude, favorably influence perceptions of a speaker. McEwen and Greenberg (1970) in an investigation of intensity and credibility found that sources employing highly intense terms were perceived as more dynamic than sources using less intense terms. Another area of non-dialectally based variation in person perception is vocalized non-fluencies. Studies of the relationship between speech fluency and source perception are few and have generally been concerned with some aspect of credibility.

Miller and Hewgill in a (1964) study examined the influence of vocalized non-fluency on speaker credibility. Non-fluencies were operationalized in this study as vocalized pauses and repetition. The authors recorded several versions of a persuasive message with various levels of non-fluency present. These taped passages were evaluated by experimental subjects with regard to tnree levels of source credibility;

competence, trustworthiness and dynamism. The findings of this study suggested that as the frequency of non-fluencies increases in a speech, audience ratings of perceived source credibility decrease. Specifically, audience ratings of a speaker's trustworthiness were most negatively correlated with the incidence of vocalized non-fluencies. A similar study by Sereno and Hawkins (1967) investigated a number of other non-fluencies. In this investigation the authors manipulated five categories of non-fluency: (1) The "ah" sound or vocalized pause, (2) Sentence correction— a correction in the choice of words, (3) Stuttering, i.e., the serial superfluous repetition of words, and (5) Tongue-slip correction, a correction of an unintended sound. All five categories were simulated by a speaker in a persuasive speech about Black Muslims. Several tape recordings were made of the speech with various levels of non-fluency present. The recordings were presented to experimental subjects. The speakers were evaluated by these subjects over a number of dimensions designed to measure the persuasiveness of the speeches and perceptions of source credibility.

It was found that varying amounts of non-fluencies did not diminish the persuasiveness of the speech. The perceived credibility of the speaker was, however, adversely affected by increases in vocalized non-fluency. Specifically, non-fluencies were found to negatively correlate with perceptions of a speaker's dynamism and competence.

The foregoing reviews represent an overview of studies that have dealt with the general, non-dialectal aspects of a person's speech style. Judging from these studies, it is obvious that the way we speak can and does affect the way we are perceived.

The studies that follow investigated the variables of status, background, and dialect with regard to their influence on a speaker's perception.

An early study by Putnam and O'Hern (1955) investigated the relationships between speech style and status. They recorded samples of speech from twelve speakers of different social and educational backgrounds. University students were asked to judge the speakers' status and background after listening to the tapes. Putnam and O'Hern found that subjects were able to somewhat accurately (mean correlation = .80) discern the speakers' background and status.

Harms (1961) in a similar study attempted to (1) obtain subjective listener judgments of speaker status and compare them with an objective status index; (2) determine the perceived credibility of speakers from different status groups, and (3) determine how accurate listeners could be in judging status from voice. Nine speakers provided the stimulus material for this experiment. All were, (1) male, (2) 30-50 years of age, and (3) had lived all their life in the American Midwest. The speakers were classified into two status groups based on education and occupation. Three were classified as high status. They held advanced degrees (DDS,PhD) and had

prestige occupations. Those classified as middle class (3) held middle status occupations and had completed high school and/or one year of college. The final three speakers were classified as lower class. This group had eighth grade educations and held unskilled jobs.

Each speaker made a 40-60 second field tape recording. The material was elicited by having each speaker respond to questions and statements on cards, such as "How are you?", "Ask for the time," etc.. The recorded conversations were non-socially salient and were similar to the kind of talk usually associated with introductory situations. One hundred and eighty non-college adults living in Columbus, Ohio, served as subjects for this experiment. These listeners were classified according to status in the same manner as the speaker. Each speaker was heard by 60 listeners (20 from each status group); listening was done in settings as diverse as firehouses, living rooms and church basements.

Most listeners reported making their judgments of both status and credibility after hearing only 10 or 15 seconds of speech, even though the recorded samples ran 40-60 seconds. Harms felt that perhaps a listener notices pronounciation and other stereotyped features most readily after he responds to some yet-to-be identified microscopic speech cues. Harms stated his findings as follows:

"(1) Listeners of all statuses on hearing short voice recordings assign mean ratings which group speakers in accordance with their objectively measured status; listeners distinguish among speakers according to status;

(2) Listeners of various statuses agree on the amount of credibility they assign to speakers of various statuses; listeners find high status speakers to be most credible and low status speakers to be the least credible;

(3) The correlation between ratings of status and credibility is significant statistically, but cannot be said to be high socially." p 168

It is interesting to note Harm's speculation that some microscopic speech variable could be responsible for the varying perceptions of speakers by listeners. It is possible that intonation or some phonological speech difference could serve to label a given speaker. Obviously the listeners were responding to some consensually held speech based perceptions that transcended their own status group.

The foregoing studies suggest that status (actual or stereotyped) to some extent can be judged from non-accented speech. In the Harms study the speakers and listeners were all from Ohio, an area which is characterized by "accentless" General American Dialect. Common sense and experience tell us that spoken language can be a identifying feature of members of a national or cultural group. Individuals in these regional or national groups are easily identifiable by their accent or dialectal speech patterns alone.

Some General Studies of Dialect and Perception.

Lambert, Hodgson and Gardner (1960), in the first of a series of studies on evaluation reactions to spoken languages, attempted to evaluate the effect dialect has on person

perception. Lambert theorized that because the use of the language is one aspect of behavior common to a variety of individuals, hearing the language is likely to arouse mainly generalized or stereotyped characteristics of the group. This suggests that when a radio broadcast of an international meeting or passages of a foreign language are encountered, a person's evaluational reactions to that communication are based, in part, on a generalized attitudinal reaction to the group that uses the particular language or dialect.

The purpose of Lambert's study was to determine the significance spoken language has for listeners by analyzing their evaluational reactions. The study was conducted in the Canadian Province of Quebec, an area charged with rivalry between French and English speaking groups. Lambert felt that this schism is as socially significant for residents of Quebec as that of the North and South for southern residents of the United States.

To test their theory, Lambert and associates, translated a 2.5 minute passage of French prose (basically non-salient) into fluent English. This passage was then recorded in French and English by four male bilinguals. Each subject recorded in both English and French. Two other males recorded French and English versions as fillers. The ten taped passages were then exposed to both French and English speaking natives. The subjects were not informed that the speakers were bilingual. The subjects were then asked to complete a response sheet for each voice which directed them to rate each of 14 traits on six point scales. These scales

rated physical and personality traits. English speaking subjects, as expected, showed more favorableness to members of their linguistic group. Surprisingly, French subjects also rated English speakers more favorably.

French subjects perceived English speakers as having more favorable physical and personality traits than speakers of their own language. Lambert felt that these findings are similar to other studies (Adelson (1953); Sarnoff (1951); Steckler (1957)) which have noted the tendency of minority groups (as the French are in this case) to sometimes adopt the stereotyped values of the majority groups. The French subjects may regard themselves as members of an inferior group. Since the French and English versions were recorded by the same subject the listeners had to have based their evaluations on community wide stereotypes of both groups.

In a similarly oriented (1962) study, Anisfeld, Boco and Lambert investigated evaluational reactions to accented English speech. This study was intended to continue on the findings of the aforementioned Quebec Study. Lambert and associates attempted to extend the implications and rationale of his previous study to Jewish people who speak English with a distinctive accent. Specifically, the study was undertaken to find out whether Jewish and English subjects will evaluate differently Jewish and English speech guises when spoken by the same person.

As in the Quebec experiment, "bilingual" speakers recorded a non-salient passage in both English and Jewish accented English. English and Jewish accented English speaking subjects were exposed to the recording and asked to evaluate the speakers physiological and personality traits.

Similar to the Quebec study English speaking subjects did not rate Jewish accented speakers favorably on any trait. Jewish subjects rated English speakers as more physically attractive and better leaders. Jewish subjects felt Jewish speakers were more entertaining, kinder, and had a better sense of humor.

A variable not present in the Quebec study was the possibility of incorrectly identifying the speaker's guise. Since both speakers in this study used English it was possible for listeners incorrectly to identify the speaker's accent. In fact, listeners did make this mistake, although not in sufficient numbers to warrant a statistical analysis. It was found, however, that Jewish subjects tended to assign Jewish guises to non-Jewish speakers and the Gentile subjects exhibited a reverse tendency, in that they identified less accented guises as Jewish. As with the subjects correctly identifying the guises, Jewish speakers were downgraded on physical and personality ratings. In comparing the correctly identified guises, very little difference between the two groups' reactions was found.

Jewish and Gentile listeners were also asked to evaluate the voices of their own ethnic groups. These ratings were grouped into three clusters: "General evaluation" which included ratings of good looks, self confidence, ambition, sociability, character and likeability," secondly, "dependability, and character," and thirdly, "affability."

These three clusters seem to answer the following questions: "Am I good or bad?" "Can people count on me?" and "Am I desired as a friend?" Jewish subjects rated themselves more favorably than did the Gentile subjects on all clusters and individual traits except religiousness. As was previously stated, Jewish subjects categorized more voices as Jewish than did Gentile subjects.

The most prominent finding of the study is the down-grading of the accented guises on height, good looks, and leadership. This reaction occurs in both incorrect and correct identification, by both Jews and Gentiles. This suggests that it was not the Jewish speaker specifically, but any person speaking with an accent (Irish, Negro, Southern, New York, etc). Since the evaluations were depicted in relation to the accented and non-accented voices of the same speaker, it seems unlikely that the basic quality of the voice played any part in eliciting reactions.

As suggested by the previously cited research, it appears likely that the accented voices aroused certain perceptual stereotypes which had been acquired through previous experience. Leadership devaluation can possibly

be based on the tendency of accented speakers to be immigrants. The authors suggested that an immigrant might not be expected to occupy positions of leadership and might logically be considered as possessing few leadership qualities.

The devaluations of height and appearance can possibly be explained by previous research, Bruner and Goodman (1947), Carter and Schooler (1949), and Lambert et al. (1969), which suggests that magnitude is a close associate of value. By extension (to the realm of person perception) it is possible that immigrants, who historically have been afforded low status roles, would be regarded as short and unattractive.

In contrast with the Quebec experiment, where the French minority consistently devaluated themselves, there was a tendency for Jewish subjects to maintain Jewish superiority when comparing Jews with non-Jews. The Jewish subject allowed for some superiority of their "immigrant" co-religionists as well. It appears that Jews have not wholly adopted negative stereotypes concerning Jews in general (as had the French); on the contrary, Jews appear to have adopted positive stereotypes concerning Jews, even for Jewish immigrants.

There are several possible explanations for these findings, as Lambert suggests. Since the Jewish accented speech was an adoptive guise for the speakers, their unfamiliarity with this mode could have caused a hesitance which resulted in the devaluated ratings of self-confidence. Similarly, Jewish listeners could have been more sensitive

to the Jewish guises due to their greater familiarity with them. Finally, in contrast with the French, Jews might consider themselves a superior minority.

In the present study,the difficulty of judging people accurately from their voices is again evident. The subjects apparently seized upon whatever information was available to them. The main sources of information were community-wide stereotypes about people with accents. This study thus reinforces the findings that stereotypes are functional in prompting subjectively or objectively correct judgments and need not necessarily function to justify prejudiced attitudes or satisfy personality needs.

In a similar study, Lambert, Anisfeld and Yeni-Komshian (1965) investigated the evaluational reactions of Jewish and Arab adolescents to dialect variations. As in the French Canadian example, bilingual speakers were recorded in several language modes, i.e., variations of Hebrew and Arabic. Taped sequences were evaluated by Arab and Jewish adolescents. Evaluational scores were recorded on a semantic differential style scale.

As in the previous studies, speech based stereotypes were found to be operating along predictable ethonocentric skews. Arab Ss found the recorded individuals in the Jewish guise less capable, less dependable and less desirable than speakers in the Arabic mode. Conversely, Jewish Ss showed a marked preference for speakers of Hebrew. Further, the Jewish Ss were found to prefer one specific dialect of Hebrew (Ashkenazic) over another (Yemenite). As in the

Hebrew-Arabic comparison, negative ascriptions were registered for speakers of Yemenite Hebrew.

Generally speakers who sound "foreign" to a particular group of listeners tend to be rated lower than speakers who do not. Mulac, Hanley and Prigge (1974) assume that the findings of Lambert and associates dialect studies were the results of the listener's reactions to one or more of the three elements of the speaker's linguistic presentation: phonology, semantics and syntax.

It was the purpose of Mulac, Hanley and Prigge's (1974) study to determine the impact of phonological aspects of European born persons' speech upon attitudinal judgments made by several groups of American listeners. The thrust of this investigation follows the findings of previous studies by assuming that the way a given communication sounds (as opposed to what it means) determines how the speaker is perceived.

Four independent variables were manipulated in this study: (1) Listener sex; (2) Listener age, occupation group (middle aged, middle class townspeople and college students); (3) Speaker sex; (4) Speaker country of origin (Norway, Italy, Eastern Europe and United States). Twenty-six foreign born graduate students were recorded during impromptu monologues in English. An important methodological divergence of this study was the feeling that spontaneous conversations sound more natural than the prepared passages of Lambert and others.

Content was controlled by asking the speakers to describe two large landscape pictures, while refraining

from mentioning his or her native country, language, age or field of study. The speakers were originally from the previously indicated areas in Europe and the United States. Male and female speakers were employed. The 16 samples determined to be most representative were selected for use in the experiment. Speaker sex and origin were randomly assigned to a 45 minute master tape. For purposes of measurement the experimenters devised a speech dialect attitudinal scale. This instrument consisted of a scale of 50 bi-polar adjectives designed to test the orthogonal dimensions along which speech foreignness is judged. Three factors were established for the final factor solution: socio-intellectual status, aesthetic quality, and dynamism.

Middle aged, middle class townspeople (26 males- 26 females) and university students (25 males- 15 females) served as experimental listeners. The subjects were all exposed to the same 45 minute tape and asked to complete the rating instrument. The results of this study corroborated the earlier findings of Lambert. Greater degrees of phonological speech foreignness exhibited by the twelve European born speakers elicited lower judgments on all three attitude dimensions than similar American born speakers. The initial findings of Lambert were confirmed in this experiment, even though many other variables were manipulated and a different experimental method was utilized. In addition,this preference for non-accented English was operative across sex and status lines.

A (1967) study by Markel, Eisler and Reese investigated the influence a person's dialect exercises on perceptions of his personality. Taped samples of speakers with Buffalo, New York,and New York, New York,"dialects" were recorded reading a standard passage. These speech samples were then evaluated by a group of undergraduates enrolled in the State University of New York at Buffalo. These experimental subjects evaluated the taped speakers via a semantic differential scale. Markel found that linguistically naive decoders were sensitive to a dialect variation of their language and this dialect stimulated a stereotypic response concerning the personality characteristics of the speakers of that dialect.

Studies involving Chicanos and American subjects have also revealed devaluation and ethnic reactions similar to Lambert's studies. In a series of "wrong number" experiments (whereby the speaker would "accidentally" call the experimental subject), Harris and Baudin (1973) found that Chicano subjects helped a Spanish surnamed confederate who spoke Spanish more than one who spoke English (this suggests that the language may have cued an ethnic sympathy reaction similar to that of the Jewish subjects in the Lambert experiment).

Building on the findings of her first study, Harris further predicted that a Spanish accent for Spanish surnamed subjects would have the same effect. Harris theorized that Anglo subjects would be more aggressive and less helpful to a caller with a Spanish accent and Spanish surnamed

subjects would be more aggressive and less helpful to callers with an English (Anglo) accent.

Harris used a methodology similar to her pilot experiment. Forty-eight Spanish surnamed and forty-eight Anglo surnamed telephone numbers were randomly selected from the telephone book. Bilingual female subjects called these numbers in either the guise of Spanish accented or non-accented "wrong numbers." The responses of the "wrong number" answerers were recorded and evaluated.

The results of this study supported the idea that prejudice against people with Spanish accents does exist; it provided no support, however, for the idea that Spanish surnamed subjects would be less aggressive and more helpful to someone with a Spanish accent. Harris found that all subjects (both Spanish and Anglo), who became more aggressive as the call went on, were in the Spanish accented condition.

These findings partially contradict Harris's expectations, but lend added support to Lambert's findings of prejudice toward all accented speech. On the basis of Lambert's Quebec experiment, it could be theorized that the Mexican subjects responded unfavorably to Spanish accented callers due to a stereotype of ethnic inferiority. This would correlate closely with Lambert's rationale for similar responses by the French ethnic group.

In the foregoing studies listeners were able to make credibility and personality judgments based on stereotypes associated with certain speech characteristics. It is

significant to note, however, that listeners were not able to identify which language features acted as cues for these judgments.

Studies of Black Non-standard Dialect.

The final area of dialect research to be reviewed in this work deals with the perceptual consequences of employing Black Non-standard English in the U.S.A. culture. It is this body of research which instigated the present study. In general, these studies have employed methodologies identical to the more general studies in the voice/perception field.

Lambert (and Tucker) employed techniques similar to his earlier investigations in a (1969) study testing reactions to various American English dialects. In this study Lambert attempted to answer the following questions: (1) Are both Negro and white subjects sensitive enough to dialect variations to make reliable differentiations? (2) If so, will there emerge a meaningful pattern of dialect preferences, i.e., some particularly favored and others disfavored? A rating instrument was devised for this study by asking Southern Black college students to indicate those traits they felt were most important for friendship and success. Their responses were tabulated and ranked in order of popularity. They were then asked to assign synonyms and free associations to the trait names. Dialect samples were selected by trained dialectologists. Recordings were made of four representatives of each of the following six dialect groups:

(1) Network English ("middle American dialect")

(2) College educated white southern speakers

(3) College educated Negro southern speakers

(4) College educated Negro speakers from Mississippi currently attending college in Washington, D.C.

(5) Southern Negro students (peer group) who spoke a dialect similar to that used by students at the Black college where testing was conducted

(6) Alumni from a New York City College.

Speakers in groups 1 and 2 were white, while the remaining speakers were Black. Each speaker recorded an identical short, non-salient passage. Both male and female speakers were used, except in category 2 (due to and oversight), which included only males. The 24 recordings were placed on two tapes, twelve speakers on each.

The listening subjects were Negro male and female college under-graduates from a southern Negro college, white male and female students from a New England college, and white male and female students attending a southern university. The students serving as judges in all three cases were asked to listen to the voices and to evaluate each speaker in terms of a 15 trait scale devised by Lambert.

Lambert and Tucker found only a few instances where sex differences in response occurred (in these the females tended to rate the speakers slightly more favorably), so the ratings of the males and females were combined.

Statistical analysis clearly demonstrated that each group was able to differentiate the various dialects. All

three rating groups (nearly unanimously), perceived the network speakers as having the most favorable profile of traits.

The dialect group rated next most favorably by both northern white and southern Negro judges was the educated southern Negro. Southern white judges on the other hand rated members of their own peer group next most favorably. Southern white students rated educated Negro southern speakers third.

In terms of the least favored group, Negro judges rated educated white southern speakers least favorably on every one of the 15 traits. Whereas, white judges, both northern and southern, rated the Mississippi peer speakers least favorably and the New York alumni speakers only slightly higher.

The two groups of white judges were also asked to indicate which race they thought the speakers were. Northern whites estimated race with the following accuracy for the six dialects: Network 95% white, educated white southern 87% white, New York alumni 49% black, educated Negro southern 49% black, Howard University 85% black, Miss. peer 94% black. White southern judges estimates were: (1) 98% white, (2) 96% white, (3) 47% black, (4) 54% black, (5) 70% black, (6) 89% black, respectively for the above six dialects. Southern whites were slightly more accurate in race estimation than northern whites, but in most cases the true race of the speakers was judged a majority of the time.

In general, subjects were clearly able to differentiate the dialect groups and they clearly favored the network style of spoken English. Lambert and Tucker felt the different perspectives of blacks and whites (with regard to least favorable) reflect basic comparisons in affectively toned attitudes that representatives of America's major ethnic groups hold toward one another. The contrasts also make it evident that speech styles which are pleasing to one social group will not necessarily be so perceived by another.

Buck, in a similar study (1968),attempted to measure the effect that a non-standard dialect has on perceptions of the speaker. In this experimental investigation Buck dealt with non-standard "New York" versions of black and white speech. Speech samples were recorded of standard and non-standard speakers reading a passage of Alice in Wonderland. Buck found that both white and black speakers employing non-standard dialectal speech styles were devaluated. Black and white standard speakers were perceived by the experimental Ss as more competent. In general, the experimental Ss preferred the "standard" New York dialect.

Buck's report of her methodology is rather brief and as a result it is difficult to evaluate its validity. The sample size was small (N=25); neither the particular scales employed nor a tabulation of results was provided. Speech samples were elicited via a script reading situation which

would serve to stifle spontaneity and standardize word choice. Both of these dimensions could significantly influence the ratings a speaker received.

Bochner and Bochner in a (1974) study explored the relationship between American social status and social dialect. The lack of systematic descriptions of listeners and speakers, listener attitudes toward speakers and language cues used in forming listener judgments of speakers, and dialects in previous studies was avoided.

Ninety-six undergraduate subjects were ranked in one of three social categories (high, middle and low) based on their occupation, education and residence. Linguistic samples representing urban Boston (deemed upper class) and the Black ghetto, Washington, D.C. (deemed lower class) were prepared. Two messages identical in semantic content, but differing in syntactical and lexical choice were prepared. Both messages were recorded by native speakers of the respective dialects. Each experimental subject heard only one message. No information pertaining to the source was supplied. Factor analysis for the experimental sample was conducted across 18 scales of authority and 18 scales of character.

Subjects responded very positively to the standard English high status syntactical patterns. Conversely, subjects evaluated negatively non-standard low status speakers. According to Bochner and Bochner these findings support the premise forwarded by most American linguists: Syntax

(word arrangement) does differentiate dialect. Furthermore, Bochner and Bochner theorized that listener status plays a weak role in speaker evaluations. The determinant may well be the norm of the listener's linguistic community. This finding is substantially the same as Lambert's, Harris's, and others' findings of preference for a dialect other than the listener's own. In this study all subjects, regardless of their own social status, held as their linguistic norm white standard American English. The positive responses to high status dialect confirm this preference.

The negative responses were viewed as rejections of a racial minority linguistic norm of which the subjects had no part. Some evidence, although slight, was found indicating perhaps certain verbal structures may affect the reaction to the meaning of a given sentence more than others.

Dialect and status effects were found for isolated vocabulary pairs along lexicon (diction) factor dimensions. These results suggest that while subjects did not respond to vocabulary as an exclusive indicator of dialect, they may have responded to vocabulary as an indicator of social status. This may be an effect of the aesthetic or intense quality of the language used. It is possible that differing groups hold different views of what is linguistically beautiful.

As in the previous attitude studies, high status (standard English) speakers were positive. Conversely, low status speakers were devaluated. Bochner and Bochner feel this

may also be a result of the linguistic norm of the listeners. They theorize that the dialect of the low status speakers served to identify them as non-members of the community. In addition, middle status (class) listeners were the most uniform in their preference for standard English speakers across the scales.

In conclusion, Bochner and Bochner present the following five conclusions with regard to speaker ethos based on social dialect:

"(1) A person's response to the dialect speech of another is not uni-dimensional. Three dimensions reflecting the factor structures of this investigation were response to meaning, response to grammar, and response to aesthetic quality.

(2) Syntactical cues appear to be primary in listener-differentiation of dialects.

(3) The social dialect of a speaker may influence listener judgments of his character, but not of his authority in a given situation.

(4) Persons of differing social status who nevertheless subscribe to a similar set of linguistic norms are not likely to make significantly different judgments about another's dialect.

(5) Dialect in speech is more likely to be a significant determinant of speaker ethos for persons of middle social status than for persons of higher or lower social status."p82

The findings that syntax is the primary cue in listener-differentiation of dialects does have some support. It is important to note that the primary determinant of the results of this study (syntax) was pre-prepared rather than spontaneous. This fact could possibly diminish the generalizability of the results.

The conclusions and contradictions of Bochner and Bochner's study serve to underscore the tentative nature of similar experiment's findings. Their apparent refutation of the belief that "intonation" plays a major role in person perception may, however, be a consequence of a faulty research design. Like most other researchers in the field, Bochner and Bochner utilized a carefully worded prepared statement as their experimental stimulus. It may well be that in their attempt to guard against content reactions to their recorded stimulus they over-compensated and confounded their findings anyway. Although prepared scripts insure content free dialogue, the mere fact that they are contrived and not spontaneous may have an influence.

On a common sense level it is apparent that naturally occurring evaluational reactions would, of course, occur as the result of spontaneous encounters. Further, in those situations where a spakers discourse is not

spontaneous (i.e. speeches, presentations, plays, etc.), it can be assumed that the speaker is familiar with the text, either through composing or rehearsing it. This element of naturalness is decidedly lacking in the foregoing studies utilizing prepared scripts.

A study by Linn (1975) described the attitudes of black and white adolescent and pre-adolescent youths toward black English. Specifically, it looked for an impact of the "Black is beautiful" movement on Black and white Americans. The methodology developed by Lambert (bi-dialectal speakers) was employed. Sixth grade and high school students listened to taped segments of three black speakers in two "guises," standard and non-standard English. They then evaluated them on a number of personality traits. Whites and blacks judged the standard English speaker to be smarter, nicer, better educated, richer, less prejudiced and more interpersonally oriented. Blacks rated the Black English speaker as taller, better looking, and better liked, while whites judged the standard English speaker to possess those qualities.

Delia (1975) investigated the effect that a speech style has on the way the spoken message is processed. Specifically, Delia predicted that when a listener makes evaluations based on perceived incongruity (between his and the heard speech style) he will anticipate certain attitudes, opinions and values in the speaker. Secondly, Delia expected to find that speakers employing stereotypical impressions will continue to use them until they

are disproven. Via a methodology using the familiar tactic of pre-recorded script speech samples,Delia confirmed his hypothesis that listeners assume incongruity (of ideas) with speakers employing different speech styles than their own. As a result listeners orient themselves toward speakers based upon the evoked "stereotypical guidelines" until further information confirms or contradicts them.

The results of Delia's study underscore the negative effects of certain dialectal styles. Not only do they color the way we perceive a speaker,but also they serve as tentative indicators of his or her attitudes and allegiances. Delia's results cannot be taken as the last word on the subject, however. The subjects were only asked to estimate the degree of similarity/dissimilarity in the abstract. The introduction of specific topics and attitude areas may have some influence on his findings.

Gardner and Taylor's (1968) study somewhat supports these findings. Their study of ethnic stereotypes in social pressure situations found subjects employed stereotypical responses when confronted with ethnic speech styles. Their findings suggest that in the absence of other information evaluational responses based on speech tend to conform more closely with ethnic stereotypes.

In an interesting (1975) study, Green investigaged the evaluations of Black Non-standard dialect by both black and white speech therapists. Green asked 24 white speech therapists to identify articulation errors in the

speech of standard speaking and non-standard speaking black children. A team of Black speech pathologists sophisticated in Black English also rated the taped speech samples. The ratings were compared for agreement. The findings indicate that disagreements between therapists and judges were a function of Black English rather than degree of deficiency. Specifically, the white and Black judges agreed about the errors present in the standard English sample but disagreed when evaluating Black dialect speech samples. Whites perceived more errors than Blacks. It is interesting that the negative perceptions of Black Non-standard English color even objective evaluations of articulation by professionally trained judges.

The foregoing research findings suggest that the use of Black Non-standard English negatively colors the way an individual is perceived over a number of personality and physical characteristic dimensions. It also appears that a person's vocal style, in this case Black Non-standard English, provides (stereotypical) clues to the users' attitudes and interpersonal orientation. Specifically, the research findings suggest that if a listener perceives a difference between his speech style and that of a given speaker he anticipates a corresponding difference between his beliefs and values and those of the "different" sounding speaker.

Dialect and Scholastic Success.

In the last few years many studies of Black Non-standard English have found that as a speech style it also exerts an influence on perceptions of a person's performance in a number of areas. It is potentially possible that remediation of negatively perceived speech styles could potentially produce results similar to the transformation in Shaw's Pygmalion. To this end recent studies have investigated the effect of ethnic stereotyping on teachers' expectations and evaluations of student performance, as teachers along with all people represent their background and fields of experience. Recent research in the area of teachers' subjective evaluations of students based on speech has been conducted. Basing their research on Bernstein's (1968) theory of elaborate and restricted codes and their socio-economic determinate, Lambert, Frender and Brown (1970) investigated the role of speech characteristics in scholastic success.

In their study, French Canadian third grade boys were compared with regard to verbal intelligence and speech characteristics. Both groups came from lower social class homes. The independent variable was school performance. Speech samples were elicited from both groups of Ss. It was found that the groups differed reliably in verbal intelligence and speech characteristics. Even with verbal intelligence statistically controlled distinctive speech patterns differentiated the groups. Speakers'

speech styles were found to differ significantly along a set of dimensions that were demonstrated to affect their interpersonal perceptions. Specifically, those third graders receiving the poorest marks in class also received the lowest speech style evaluations.

Conversely, "proper" speech styles were an accurate predictor of good grades. Even when verbal intelligence was similar it was found that a lower class youngster's style of speech may mark or caricature him and thus adversely affect his opportunities to improve, including his opportunity in school performance. These findings conflict with Bernstein's "restricted code" theory in that presentational qualities (intonation, pitch, etc.) not terms employed, played the key role.

Williams, Whitehead and Miller (1971) set out to analyize the "pygmalion effect," the attitudes which language characteristics may elicit in listeners. This study focused upon teachers' stereotyping of pupils. Specifically, they tested the degree to which visual cues of a child's ethnicity will influence judgments of a standard English speech sample. Prior research showed that some teachers incorrectly rated the speech and language of particular children in video taped speech samples. They matched some standard English samples with video images of Black, white, and Mexican children.

It was found that the video tape image showing the child's ethnicity affects ratings of his language in the

direction of racial stereotyping. For Black children the bias was in the direction of expecting them to sound more ethnic and non-standard than their white peers.

Although this study does not deal with the actual consequences of using non-standard English it is an interesting documentation of the expectations ethnicity elicits with regards to speech stereotypes.

Williams (1970), in another study investigating the consequences of Black English, examined the influence a student's speech style has on teacher evaluations.

Taped samples of fifth and sixth grade children (from Detroit schools) were played to 33 primary school teachers. Students were ranked beforehand via their socio-economic status as high or low status. Teachers were asked to evaluate the "correctness" of the child's speech style via a semantic differential type scale. The teachers were able to make statistically reliable differentiations of the Black children's social status but not of the white children. White teacher's evaluations reflected a direct association between race and status. White teachers more strongly associated speech standardness with social status than did black teachers.

Piche, Michlin, Rubin and Sullivan (1977) undertook a study to determine the relative effect of dialect ethnicity, social class and quality of written composition on teachers'subjective evaluations of fourth grade children. As in most previous studies audio recordings of subjected

speech samples were evaluated by a group of potential speakers. These samples were elicited by asking the children spontaneously to tell a story based on a series of cartoons. In addition, the subjects were video taped for comparison of visual and vocal cues.

Finally, 75 fourth grade children submitted papers for evaluation. The four highest and the four lowest were converted to typed scripts for presentation to the experimental subjects. The results of their study did not disconfirm the presence of social stereotyping process in teachers subjective student evaluations. It did, however, accentuate the complexity of such processes. Attributions of socio-economic status were found to have a main effect. Interactions of socio-economic status, dialect, ethnicity and quality of written composition were found to influence teachers' subjective evaluations.

Further, and disquietingly, the study revealed that the quality of the children's written compositions exerted the least direct effect on the teachers' judgments.

In line with other studies, Piche et al. conclude that ethnic stereotypes act in a relative, not absolute manner. Their first effects are modified over time by reinforcing or counteracting information such as written performance.

DeMeis and Turner (1978) addressed the effects of race, dialect and physical attractiveness on teachers' evaluations of performance. Students were Black and

white and were pre-rated as high, middle or low in attractiveness and were ranked as either standard or non-standard English speakers. Sixty-eight white elementary school teachers listened to responses from these children and then rated them in terms of personality, quality of response and current and future academic potential. Results showed that generally Black and Black English speaking children and low attractive students were rated lower. These results provide some support for attributing these children's academic failures to their race, dialect or appearance rather than their performance.

Granger, Mathews, Quay and Verner (1977) investigated teacher evaluations of functionally equivalent speech samples obtained from twelve middle and lower class (socio-economic) Black and white third graders. Fifty-six female preschool and elementary school teachers rated and ranked taped picture descriptions. Results indicated that middle socio-economic status children were rated more positively than the lower status group and that white speakers were perceived more favorably than Black speakers.

A similar study by Sanford (1978) examined the actual number of phonological deviations, syntatic deviations, and reading deviations (Black vs. white) in relation to teacher evaluations. Sixty-one classroom teachers from the Midwest listened to tape recordings of three Black children and three white children reading perfectly.

Subjects were instructed to record all deviations they considered errors. Teachers recorded a significantly greater number of deviations for the Black readers. The subjects recorded significantly more phonological deviations for the Black readers. The subjects recorded significantly more syntactical errors for the white readers. There was no interaction between ratings and the attitude scale.

Purpose of the Study.

The compelling consensus of research centered around Black Non-standard English is that speakers employing this speech style are negatively perceived in terms of personality, physical characteristics, power, and ability. These devaluations, while stereotypical and inaccurate, are nonetheless a potentially limiting consideration for BNS speakers in the actual practice. Unanswered in these studies, however, is the question of how listeners are able to make these consensual ascriptions. It must be remembered that the preponderance of research in this field involves taped samples of speech with no demographic data about the speaker. Yet in study after study, evaluative listeners, ranging from college freshmen to speech pathologists, have responded in remarkably similar ways to Black Non-standard English. BNS has been identified by various studies as being negatively perceived. These negative perceptions have been noted cross culturally and have been registered even by those who employ BNS as their sole or primary speech style. These same studies have

identified standard English General American dialect as the evaluative opposite of BNS in that it is the most favorably perceived speech style yet tested. Studies of General American dialect indicate that, regardless of their own habitual speech style listeners respond favorably to speakers employing GA.

The research reviewed for this study suggests that discriminations made based on the use of BNS are made over aesthetic and stylistic considerations rather than comprehensional ones. While research findings do suggest that the use of BNS does inhibit the user's ability to decode standard English symbol arrangement and comprehension, no studies suggest that cross-racial comprehension barriers are the basis for negative evaluations of BNS. These negative stereotypical perceptions, therefore, must be based on stylistic considerations. Simply stated, something about the way the BNS speaker "sounds" negatively influences the way he is perceived.

Unfortunately it is unclear what specific aspects of speech style are responsible for these ascriptions. It is of immediate importance then to determine the basis for the speech borne stereotypical ascriptions noted in the literature. No attempt heretofore has been made to separate the two elements of a speaker's style which may be responsible for speech discriminations, (1) grammatical and (2) phonological differences (accents). Further complicating the situations is the use of "matched guise, or non-salient

prepared script, methodologies in the preponderance of speech style investigations. Matched guise studies employ only one speaker who is "fluent" in both of the dialects or styles under investigation. These "bi-dialectal" speakers record a prepared script in both modes of speech for evaluation by listeners. A similar strategy commonly employed in person perception research involves the use of several dialectally representative speakers reading content controlled scripts. The goal of both of these approaches is to control the salience of the recorded passages and so isolate the para-linguistic variables for investigation. The pitfall of these methodologies is their inherent lack of naturalness. It is possible that this lack of "spontaneity" could have influenced the results of the studies in which they were employed.

Lee (1970) voices this same criticism of the unnaturalness of most of the prepared passages employed in person perception research. He contends that most of these samples are characteristic of reading style and as such are not related to spontaneous (oral style) communication in general. In addition, Lee feels that methodologies which employ repeated content controlled messages free listeners (due to repetition) to be more discriminating in their evaluations of speakers after the initial recitation. Lee contends that most of a listener's attention is absorbed by simple message decoding, unless the message is repeated.

If a valid methodology could be developed which provided a separation between the phonological and grammatical aspects of oral communication, it might allow the identification of the specific variables which are associated with the negative stereotypes engendered by Black Non-standard English. The ability to identify and distinguish between the major elements of spoken language would be of great assistance in the remediation or alteration of the specific variables that arouse negative perceptions of the person in these cases. Traditional education in the United States places emphasis on standard grammar and syntax. Studies of speech style conducted in secondary schools (reported previously) suggest that even when using standard English syntax and grammar Black children can still be negatively evaluated on speech related variables. Harms (1961) in his conclusions hypothesized the existence of "micro-scopic" speech cues which act as the basis for discriminations of status from the voice. It may well be that the elements of speech (BNS or any style) that arouse stereotypical responses in the listener operate below the level of grammar and structure. A methodology sensitive to the minute levels of speech style could facilitate the remediation of any undesirable speech characteristics by isolating them for specific attention.

It was the purpose of this investigation to develop a valid methodology with the ability to simply discriminate between the grammatical and phonological channels of spoken

language and to investigate the evaluative consequences of using BNS (as compared with standard English General American dialect) via that means.

Hypotheses.

Based on the implications of previous research, the following hypotheses were forwarded for testing in this study:

(1) A. Speakers who employ Black Non-standard English dialect will be less favorably perceived over three evaluative measures than individuals employing standard General American Dialect.

B. Due to the pervasive nature of the stereotypes associated with the two dialects the preference for SEGA and BNS will be consistent across racial and sexual lines.

(2) Evaluations of these two speech styles (as well as others) are primarily based in the phonological aspects of speech rather than the grammatical aspects. Specifically, BNS speakers will be negatively perceived even when employing the word choice of General American Speakers.

Chapter TWO

METHODS

Experimental Tape.

The experimental stimuli of this study were audio taped samples of 8 male speakers of two American (U.S.) English dialects: Black Non-standard (N=4) and General American (N=4). To control the salience of the content of these speech samples the speakers employed in this study were recorded describing a landscape by Van Gogh. These spontaneous descriptions were 60 seconds in duration. By spontaneous it is meant that the speakers described a common stimulus, each employing their own unprompted, idiosyncratic word choice and order. A major goal of this study was to separate the grammatical and the phonological aspects of the two speech styles. In essence, to test the veracity of the cliché "it's not what you say but how you say it." To achieve this end, once the spontaneous descriptions were gathered, they were reduced to script form complete with mispronunciations and vocalized non-fluencies. These scripts were then returned to the two groups of speakers. Each speaker then recorded the script of a randomly assigned dialectal counterpart.

The exchange and recording of scripts by dialectal counterparts is designed to separate the pnonological and grammatical aspects of the speakers' speech styles, and in this way, allow the separate evaluation of their impact on person perception. The initial tape, then, consisted of

16, 60 second speech samples collected from 8 speakers in each of two conditions: spontaneous description and script reading. The complete scripts are listed in appendix 1.

To control ordering effects, the experimental tape was constructed by randomly ordering two (15-20 second) segments of each speaker's speech in each of the two speaking styles. In this way each speaker was evaluated 4 different times, twice from segments of spontaneous description and twice from segments of script reading. This procedure yielded an experimental tape that consisted of 32 randomly ordered segments of speech.

Research by Harms (1961) has determined that listeners form speech based evaluations of speakers in the first 10-15 seconds they are exposed to their voices. As a result of these findings the brief duration of the speech segments used in this study is not considered to pose a threat to validity or a limitation for the overall purposes of this research. The brief duration of the segments also prevented rater fatigue from confounding results. The relatively large number of samples (32) rated was designed to prevent raters from focusing (negatively or positively) on one particular speaker and in that way skewing the data.

Speakers.

The speakers employed in this study were selected by a three step process. Potential speakers were first selected by the way they "sounded" to the untrained ear of the experimenter. Secondly, in an attempt to control all variables besides the ones in experimental consideration,

only speakers with similar backgrounds were employed. All speakers were males between the ages of 20 and 40. Further, all speakers were currently enrolled in college or had already completed a college degree. General American speakers were also required to have originated in and spent the majority of their lives in the midwestern United States.

Finally, to test the "untrained ear" of the experimenter and determine positively the dialectal representativeness of the potential speech samples the tape of the 32 randomly ordered speech samples was independently judged by 3 dialect experts. In sum, the speakers can be considered valid representatives of their dialects.

Rating Scales.

The aforementioned research generally concluded that accurate specific determinations of personality or physical characteristics cannot be made from the voice. However, very reliable and valid judgments can be made on a general evaluative dimension (Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum 1957). The perceptions of the speakers in this study were made via three highly factor loaded bi-polar adjective pairs which tapped the evaluative dimension (good-bad, wise-foolish, rich-poor). The individual scores from these scales were combined to compute a mean evaluative factor score. The evaluative dimension was considered highly relevant for this research since it deals with the factors most potent in real world speech judgments. The rating instrument consisted of 3 sheets (one for each of the above adjective pairs) on

which each rater rated all 32 segments on one six point bi-polar adjective scale. The scales were constructed with the "positive" scores on the left and the "negative" scores on the right. Each scale position was given a value from one to six, reading from left to right. As a result low mean scores indicated positive ratings, while high mean scores indicated negative ratings. Each rater rated the speakers on only one of the three scales. The three scales were randomly distributed to the raters. The sex, race, and age of the rater were also collected on each sheet.

Raters.

Raters in this study were 48 graduate business students (24 male, 24 female) enrolled in the MBA program of the Business school at the University of Central Florida, during the spring quarter of 1981. Graduate business students were specifically used to give some actual practice validity to any experimental results. It was felt that as these individuals were (or soon would be) in positions of responsibility in the realm of business (possibly in hiring and personnel functions) their evaluations would graphically illustrate the actual practice consequences of employing the two speech styles tested. All raters were white. A statistically acceptable number of Black raters were not present in the rater population; therefore, it was not possible to use Blacks as raters.

Administration of Rating Scales.

The design of this study permitted all experimental data to be collected in one session. This is viewed as an asset as it controlled any influence that different class settings

and administration times may have had on the results. The experimental raters were told that they would be participating in a study judging personality from voice. No information about the dialectal nature of the study was provided. Further, no demographic information about the speakers was provided.

On the experimental tape the speakers were identified only by number (1-32); a 15 second rating period of blank tape was provided after each speech segment. The three scales employed to tap the evaluative dimension were randomly distributed to the raters. Each rater received only one scale over which he or she evaluated all speech segments. Once the experimental tape was started, it ran continuously until its conclusion. The tape itself was played on the same Wollensak Cassette Recorder Player that was used to compile the 32 segment tape in order to minimize static.

Chapter THREE

RESULTS

A 2 x 2 x 2 factorial analysis of variance (Style x Dialect x Rater's sex, Bruning and Kintz, 1968) was computed for the evaluative ratings obtained by the procedure described above. Tables 1 and 2 indicate the results of the Analysis of Variance. These results indicate that the speaking style and the dialect employed affect an audience's evaluations of a speaker. Figure 1 graphically displays these same results.

The Duncan Multi-range Test was used to make multiple comparisons of the mean scores. For an $\underline{N}$ of 96, mean scores of 4.0 script style and 3.49 spontaneous style were significantly different ($\underline{p} = .05$). Mean ratings of the GA and BNS dialects also differed significantly ($\bar{X} = 3.27$, GA; $\bar{X} = 4.21$, BNS; $\underline{p} = .05$). No difference was noted between means obtained from male and female raters.

Table 1

Results of Factorial Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	DF	F	p
Style	12.65	1	26.75	.001
Dialect	42.37	1	89.54	.001
Sex	0.69	1	1.48	.22
Style x Dialect	60.77	1	128.41	.001
Style x Sex	0.00	1	0.00	.97
Dialect x Sex	0.71	1	1.51	.22
Style x Dialect x Sex	0.15	1	0.33	.55

Table 2

Mean Scores for Each Dialect Style Group

Dialect	Style: Spontaneous	Style: Script
GA	2.4	4.1*
BNS	4.5	3.9

* indicates $p = .0001$

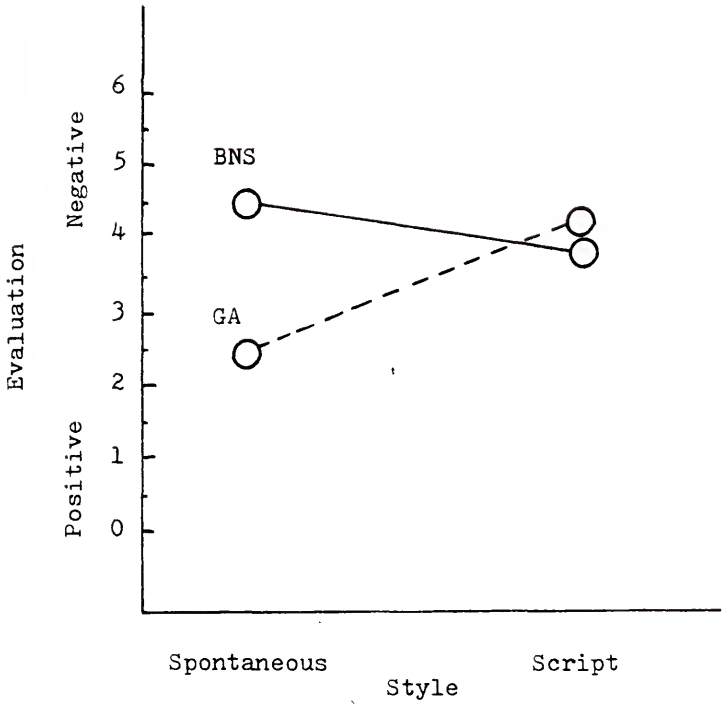


Figure 1

Graph of Mean Scores for Each Dialect Style Group

Chapter FOUR

DISCUSSION

The results of this research suggest that speakers who employ Black Non-standard dialect as their primary speech style are negatively evaluated because of the grammatical and phonological aspects of that style. These findings refute the author's second hypothesis, which predicted that the phonological aspects of BNS are primarily responsible for the negative perceptions of that dialect.

In line with the predictions of hypothesis two, BNS speakers were negatively perceived both, when speaking spontaneously and also when speaking with the grammar of the GA dialect. The interaction effect noted between the speaking condition and speakers' dialect (graphically displayed in Figure 1) suggests that the negative evaluations of BNS dialect stem from both the phonological and grammatical aspects of that speech style. Mean scores for BNS speakers were consistently negative in both speaking styles (Table 2) while positive evaluations of GA speakers decreased dramatically when those speakers employed the grammar of BNS dialect. It is possible, of course, that some degree of this difference in evaluation can be attributed to the differences in spontaneous speech and script reading.

As a result, the differences in rater evaluation of GA speakers could potentially be viewed as support for Lee's (1970) criticism of script-based dialect research. It must be remembered, however, that the BNS speakers were negatively evaluated across conditions. The author observed that the taped segments of the GA speakers employing the grammatical elements of BNS dialect sparked derisive snickers and laughter during the collection of data. This suggests that those grammatical elements more than the different speaking styles were responsible for the significant difference between conditions.

Hypothesis 1-A predicted that the BNS speakers would be negatively evaluated as compared to GA speakers. Hypothesis 1-B predicted no difference between the rating of the male and female raters when rating the BNS speakers. Both components of this hypothesis were confirmed (Table one). These results support the findings of prior investigations of BNS dialect. The findings of this study suggest clearly that even in situations where Black Non-standard speakers have similar backgrounds and qualifications to General American speakers, and where the speaking situations and topics are identical, BNS speakers will be at an evaluative disadvantage due to the negative stereotype evoked by their speech style. Even greater social significance can be attached to these findings when it is recalled that the data responsible for this conclusion were collected from graduate students of business, individuals who currently, or in the

near future will occupy positions of responsibility and leadership in the business community where this study was conducted.

The results of this study suggest that dialect is a major dimension that raters rely on for their opinions of other individuals. Specifically, that to whatever extent a dialect can evoke a stereotypic response, the Black Non-standard speaker will be at a disadvantage. It is not the intention of this study to predict the consequences of that disadvantage, but it is intuitive that in the competitive business situations even small differences between individuals can be significant.

The findings of this study lend renewed support to the conclusion that Black Non-standard dialect is a negatively perceived speech style. Further, it confirms that the negative perceptions of this speaking style are consistent between male and female raters. Future research should determine the pervasiveness of this effect across other variables (e.g. status and race) while underscoring the pragmatic desirability of altering this negatively perceived style (in essence to become bi-dialectal).

This study cannot offer a clear identification of the specific elements of grammar or phonology in each of the two aspects of BNS dialect which are responsible for negative evaluations. Future research should attempt to further "break down" these two aspects of dialect to identify specific

variables and facilitate their remediation. It may well be possible to alter or eliminate the negatively perceived elements of Black Non-standard dialect without adulterating or diluting it as the carrier of culture and source of ethnic identification its proponents suggest.

The most important finding of this study indicates that achieving that end will require attention to both the grammatical and phonological aspects of speech. Clearly a system of English instruction which focuses solely on one or the other of these two dimensions will be less than successful in eliminating the negative stereotypes associated with BNS dialect.

APPENDIX 1

Scripts of Speakers 1 Through 8

Speaker 1 General American English

I'm looking at a picture by Van Gogh. The description of this picture is....I think it's an oil. It looks like a field, a wheat field, there's a road going through the wheat field with some clouds in the distance and some, a lot of black maybe crows. There also looks to be some like green "foilage" next to the field and it looks like wheat and it looks like there's a wind blowing across the field, uhm, other than that I can't...it looks like, ah....it's not very definite and its not very specific it's just an oil and it's not...it's pretty abstract actually. To give you more of an idea...the birds there's quite a bit of them flying....flying to the east, and they're all heading in that direction.

Speaker 2 General American English

I'm looking at a picture that has many different colors in it and various shades of some of the same colors. It appears to be a wheat field. Within the wheat field are various yellows and shades of green and red, there is a blue sky overhead. There seems to be at least two or three white clouds. There are a number of birds pictured

in the scene flying at various levels. The wheat field takes up approximately two thirds of the picture and the sky the remaining portion. The predominant colors in the picture are yellow and blue. It's a fairly interesting picture I suppose, if one were to si...sit and....dwell on it for a long length of time one might be able to place various meanings in terms of what the author might....ah have been intending.

Speaker 3 General American English

My interpretation of this picture is...it looks like a wheat field with a winding road down the middle of it with two roads at each end. Crows are flying overhead.... the ah sky looks like it's about to rain....a few clouds in the sky dark blue. It looks like the ah...wind could be blowin the wheat around, very tranquil looking....looks like about twenty birds altogether but who's countin.

Speaker 4 General American English

I'm looking at a painting by Van Gogh. It's one of the last paintings that he did, it's of a cornfield with crows flying over it. It's done in an oil technique kind of a "pasteche" that has dimension, it has bright colors which are typical of the artist, very bright colors which are typical of the artist. There is a road leading into the cornfield. This was one of the final paintings that he did before committing suicide and if I remember correctly he blew his brains out in the corn field he is painting here. The dominant colors are blue, yellow, ah.. sort of a reddish brown and green.

Speaker 5 Black Non-standard English

Dis piture I'm "describin" is blue, yellow, green. Da road design is green with brown "stripin" da artist he use somethin like an arch brush, oil brush base. He have an arrangement of birds in the blue like shade "symbolizin" da sky, da yellow is symbolizin a field of some sort, he have darker shades or it may be symbolizin a storm or a cloud or somethin of this nature with a whirl of white in da mixture of blue may be symbolizin sunlight. Da picture is very colorful and it's by Van Ghōse I'm told. Some parts look like water but it's hard to tell because of the minglin of the colors.

Speaker 6 Black Non-standard English

This is a picture by Van Gogh. Theres very lotta description in this picture. I'm gonn start with the colors that's in this picture. There's a very dark blue sky in the picture where you can see about 20 to 25 birds which is flying through the picture. On each side of the picture there is ah....real yellow grass which looks more like wheat and in between the two pictures there is a dark red clay road which look like it passes through the gre.... the yellow wheat thats on each side of the road. Out in the field looks like there hasn't been a rain in a while everything looks dr...dry. The birds look as if they were flying east in this picture, flying towards the storm or something else thats on the picture.

Speaker 7 Black Non-standard English

This picture it's in this class I got uhh it's somethin bout ahh bout Van Gogh right, and uhh this picture's called ahh Crows or whatever, and it's like got a bunch of like black spots but I don't really be into it, and uhh we just be sittin around talkin and everybody be half asleep and ahh an it too much to it ahh and that's about it.

Speaker 8 Black Non-standard English

I got a, gotta painting here I'm looking at. It's got a lotta different strokes of the brushes and stuff, it's got a lotta different colors, sky blue. It's gotta lot of black marks supposed to be birds, look like they flyin over....don't know if it's land or what. Just a bunch a, guess it's supposed to be land cause it's sorta brownish. Ya got some birds flying high, some flying low, ya got a few white spots look like ma....maybe they could be clouds, well it could be runnin through a runnin river, flyin through a valley or somethin. Land on both sides birds flyin away uhm looks pret...looks pretty neat. Sorta a abstract like paintin. You probably see different things in it if you really tried.

APPENDIX 2

Your sex__ Your race__ Your age__

SPEAKER	RICH			POOR		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	—	—	—	—	—	—
9	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	—	—	—	—	—	—
11	—	—	—	—	—	—
12	—	—	—	—	—	—
13	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—	—	—
16	—	—	—	—	—	—
17	—	—	—	—	—	—
18	—	—	—	—	—	—
19	—	—	—	—	—	—
20	—	—	—	—	—	—
21	—	—	—	—	—	—
22	—	—	—	—	—	—
23	—	—	—	—	—	—
24	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	—	—	—	—	—	—
26	—	—	—	—	—	—
27	—	—	—	—	—	—
28	—	—	—	—	—	—
29	—	—	—	—	—	—
30	—	—	—	—	—	—
31	—	—	—	—	—	—
32	—	—	—	—	—	—

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